



Chapter 5. Recreation

5.1 Overview

This chapter summarizes regulatory and planning guidance relevant to recreation, and describes existing recreational facilities at ARC and in nearby communities. It also discusses relevant policies and measures that address potential recreational impacts of operations and future development at ARC. Information presented in this chapter was obtained from the November 2009 NASA ARC ERD (NASA 2009), NADP EIS (Design, Community & Environment 2002), local planning documents, and other sources.

5.2 Regulatory Background

5.2.1 Federal Regulations

5.2.1.1 *Coastal Zone Management Act*

The Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) was enacted in 1972 to regulate development affecting coastal waters and adjacent shorelines. The CZMA also applies to the inland belt that has “significant and direct impacts on coastal waters.” Under the CZMA, states are encouraged voluntarily to develop coastal zone management programs (CZMPs) to preserve and protect the unique features relevant to each coastal area. In many places, the effort to preserve and protect coastal resources includes providing for planned and managed recreational use.

The Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration approve CZMPs. All federal projects and projects that require a federal permit must be consistent with approved CZMPs. In California, local coastal programs developed under the California Coastal Act serve as each area’s CZMP.

For the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge, the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project (SBSRP) has an approved EIS/Environmental Impact Report, which evaluated the impacts of the transfer of over 10,000 acres of salt evaporation ponds to tidal waters and wildlife habitat functions.

5.2.1.2 *National Environmental Policy Act*

NEPA requires federal agencies to include in their decision-making process appropriate and careful consideration of all environmental effects of a proposed action and of possible alternative actions. Measures to avoid or minimize the adverse effects of proposed actions and to restore and enhance environmental quality as much as possible must be developed and discussed where feasible.



5.2.2 State Regulations

5.2.2.1 *McAteer-Petris Act and San Francisco Bay Plan*

The McAteer-Petris Act, passed by the State of California in 1965, established the BCDC as the state agency responsible for regulating development in and around San Francisco Bay (Bay) and mandated the planning effort that resulted in development of the San Francisco Bay Plan (Bay Plan). Shortly thereafter, the federal CZMA encouraged states to voluntarily develop CZMPs, as described above. Partly in response to these federal recommendations, the California Coastal Act of 1976 established the California Coastal Commission and recognized the BCDC as the state agency with primary responsibility for enforcing the state's CZMP within the Bay Area.

The Bay Plan describes the values associated with the Bay and presents policies and planning maps to guide future uses of the bay and its shoreline. Under the Bay Plan, priorities for suitable uses of the shoreline include ports, water-related industry, airports, wildlife refuges, and water-related recreation. The Bay Plan also proposes adding land to the Bay wildlife refuge system; encourages public access via marinas, waterfront parks, and beaches; and requires the provision of maximum access along the waterfront and certain shorelines, except where public uses conflict with other significant uses, or where public use is inappropriate because of safety concerns.

BCDC is responsible for implementing the policies of the Bay Plan. All federal projects in the Bay Area's shoreline regions are required to submit a consistency determination to BCDC and to demonstrate consistency with the Bay Plan and the appropriate Bay Plan maps. Moffett Field is an airport priority use area and it is recommended that the site be evaluated for use as a commercial airport if the site is ever declared surplus by the military. (The Bay Plan specifically states that it "does not advocate the closing of any military installation.") The Bay Plan also recommends that the salt ponds adjacent to the north end of Moffett Field be reserved for possible airport expansion if and when these ponds are not needed for salt production.

5.2.3 Local Regulations

5.2.3.1 *Bay Trail Plan*

Senate Bill 100, enacted in 1987, directed the ABAG to develop a plan and identify an alignment for a trail envisioned as a "ring around the Bay." The resulting Bay Trail Plan, adopted by ABAG in July 1989, includes a proposed alignment; a set of policies to guide the future selection, design, and implementation of specific routes; and strategies for financing and implementation. Since the adoption of the Bay Trail Plan, most of the jurisdictions along the Bay Trail alignment have passed resolutions in support of the Bay Trail and have incorporated the trail into their general plans. In 1990, the San Francisco Bay Trail Project was created as a nonprofit organization dedicated to planning, promoting, and advocating implementation of the Bay Trail. The San Francisco Bay Trail Project is administered by ABAG and is housed at ABAG's offices in Oakland.



5.2.3.2 *City of Mountain View*

5.2.3.2.1 Parks and Open Space Plan

The City of Mountain View regards its parks and other open spaces as some of its most important resources and has developed a Park and Open Space Plan to guide the long-term acquisition, development, and preservation of parkland. The Parks and Open Space Plan is a comprehensive review of open space needs for the City of Mountain View. In addition to offering a long-term vision to guide land use planning decisions, it also provides detailed evaluation of current needs in the city and prioritizes recommendations for the acquisition, improvement, and preservation of parks and open space based on the perceived need (City of Mountain View 2008).

5.2.3.2.2 City of Mountain View General Plan

The Parks, Open Space and Community Facilities Element of the Mountain View General Plan (City of Mountain View 2012) includes six key goals for open space and recreational facilities within the city, as summarized below.

- Goal POS-1: An expanded and enhanced park and open space system.
- Goal POS-2: Parks and public facilities equitably distributed throughout the community and accessible to residents and employees.
- Goal POS-3: Open space areas with natural characteristics that are protected and sustained.
- Goal POS-4: Parks and public facilities that are well designed and integrated with the surrounding neighborhood.
- Goal POS-5: Cooperation between the City and local school districts to meet shared open space, recreation and education needs.
- Goal POS-6: An integrated system of multi-use trails connecting to key local and regional destinations and amenities.

5.2.3.3 *City of Sunnyvale*

5.2.3.3.1 City of Sunnyvale General Plan

Like Mountain View, the City of Sunnyvale considers parklands an essential component of a desirable urban environment and is committed to maintaining and improving its system of parks and open space. The Land Use and Transportation Chapter of the Sunnyvale General Plan (City of Sunnyvale 2011) articulates two goals for open space in the city, as summarized below.



- Goal LT -8: Adequate and Balanced Open Space. Provide and maintain adequate and balanced open space and recreation facilities for the benefit of maintaining a healthy community based on community needs and the ability of the city to finance, construct, maintain and operate these facilities now and in the future.
- Goal LT -9: Regional Approach to Open Space. A regional approach to providing and preserving open space and providing open space and recreational services, facilities and amenities for the broader community.

5.3 Regional Setting

This section describes offsite recreational facilities in the vicinity, with a focus on facilities that are close enough to ARC that they are likely to be used by ARC employees, residents, and visitors. Wescoat Army housing complex has been privatized and new housing has been constructed. This development includes recreation facilities and green belt area.

- Shoreline at Mountain View Regional Park. Shoreline at Mountain View Regional Park is a 280-hectare (700-acre) regional recreation and wildlife area. It offers concert and event facilities, a network of hiking and biking trails, a restored Victorian home built by Henry Rengstorff in 1867, a championship golf course, a 20-hectare (50-acre) saltwater sailing lake, and a meadow area for picnics and play. It also includes natural areas that offer important habitat for wildlife and migratory birds.
- San Vernon Park. San Vernon Park has an area of 0.8 hectare (2 acres) and includes a basketball court, playground, picnic area, and outdoor volleyball court.
- Stevenson Park. Stevenson Park has an area of 5 hectares (12 acres) and offers a basketball court, playground, soccer/football field, picnic area, softball field, and tennis courts.
- Whisman Park. Whisman Park has an area of 5 hectares (12 acres) and offers a basketball court, playground, soccer/football field, softball field, tennis courts, barbeque facilities, outdoor volleyball court, and access to hiking trails.
- Baylands Preserve. Operated by the City of Palo Alto and bounded by Mountain View and East Palo Alto, the 785-hectare (1,940-acre) Baylands Preserve is the largest tract of undisturbed marshland in the Bay Area. It includes 24 kilometers (5 linear miles) of multiuse trails, the Lucy Evans Baylands Nature Interpretive Center, the Byxbee Park Hills Art Park, and picnic and barbecue facilities. Baylands Preserve is widely considered to offer some of the best bird-watching opportunities available in the Bay Area.
- Sunnyvale Municipal Golf Course. The Sunnyvale Municipal Golf Course offers 18 holes and has an extent of about 80 hectares (200 acres), of which 15 hectares (35 acres) are part of ARC.



- Baylands Park. Baylands Park offers more than 30 hectares (70 acres) of developed parkland that includes play areas, picnic areas, and the Baylands Grove Amphitheater. It also provides connections to the Bay Trail. An additional 40 hectares (105 acres) of seasonal wetland habitat is protected as a wetlands preserve.
- Stevens Creek Trail. Stevens Creek Trail is a heavily used feeder trail for the Bay Trail. It starts at Landels Park in Mountain View and follows Stevens Creek through urban residential neighborhoods and high-tech business parks to the Bay Trail. A portion of the Stevens Creek Trail follows the western edge of the ARC campus.
- Stevens Creek Shoreline Nature Study Area. The Stevens Creek Shoreline Nature Study Area is a nature preserve operated by the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District. This area is part of the NASA Ames Storm Water Retention Pond (SWRP) complex and is accessed via a pedestrian bridge from Shoreline at Mountain View Regional Park.
- Bay Trail. The Bay Trail is planned as a multiuse recreational corridor offering 805 kilometers (500 continuous miles) of hiking and bicycling trails encircling San Francisco and San Pablo Bays (San Francisco Bay Trail Project 2014). Insofar as possible, proposed Bay Trail alignments incorporate BCDC's public access trails, which were designed in accordance with the Bay Plan. To date, approximately 544 kilometers (338 miles) of the trail network have been completed, including segments at Baylands Park in Sunnyvale, Alviso Marina County Park in Alviso, and Shoreline at Mountain View Regional Park in Mountain View. In 2002, ARC and ABAG signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to plan a potential route and preferred alignment for an approximately two-mile segment of the Bay Trail along the northern perimeter of ARC (NASA 2002) (see Figure 5-1). ARC granted an easement to the USFWS to manage the "Moffett Gap" portion of the Bay Trail, and the trail was later constructed along a levee to the north of ARC. The trail was officially opened to the public in 2010. There are no plans to relocate this segment to ARC (Thompson 2014).

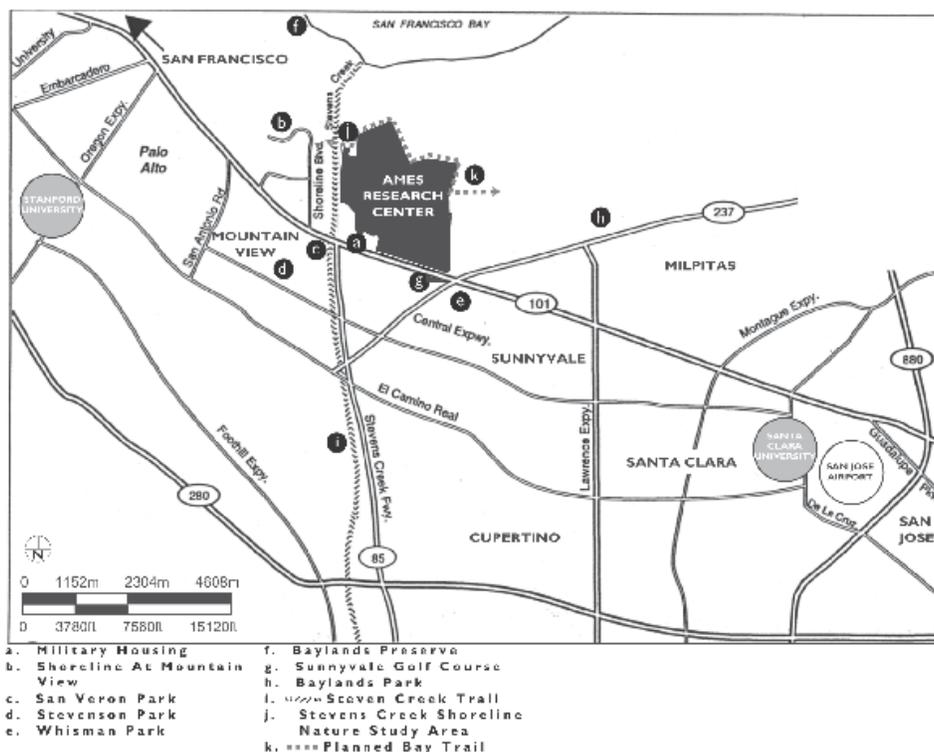


Figure 5-1. Recreational Facilities in the Vicinity

(Source: NASA 2009)

- Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge. Founded in 1974, Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge was the first urban National Wildlife Refuge established in the United States. The USFWS administers the refuge, which encompasses 30,000 acre of open bay, salt pond, salt marsh, mudflat, upland and vernal pool habitats located throughout South San Francisco Bay (See Figure 5-1).

5.4 Existing Site Conditions

ARC offers a variety of recreational opportunities. The total area of recreational and open space areas on the ARC campus is approximately 215 hectares (535 acres). Of this, approximately 50 hectares (123 acres) support existing or planned active recreation facilities such as the following.

- The 45-hectare (112-acre) golf course in the Eastside/Airfield area
- Playing fields
- The swimming pool
- Picnic grounds
- Volleyball courts



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- Informal recreation areas
 - Natural areas that are used for walking and trail running

The perimeter roads encircling the Bay View and North of Bay View areas are also used for walking and running. NASA's Bicycle Commute Trail (also used by pedestrians) extends from the Stevens Creek Trail to the former Wright Avenue Gate (Gate 17).

5.5 Environmental Requirements

NASA has identified the following environmental policies and measures that address potential recreational impacts of operations and future development at ARC.

5.5.1 NASA Procedural Directive 8500.1, NASA Environmental Management

Per NPD 8500.1, it is NASA policy to: maintain compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local environmental requirements; to incorporate environmental risk reduction and sustainable practices to the extent practicable throughout NASA's programs, projects, and activities; and to consider environmental factors throughout the life cycle of programs, projects, and activities (as defined in NPD 7120.4, *NASA Engineering and Program/Project Management Policy*, and related documents), including planning, development, execution, and disposition activities. Examples of environmental factors include consideration of environmental impacts as required by the NEPA and NHPA; the proposed use of hazardous materials; the potential for waste generation; the need to acquire necessary permits, waivers, and authorizations; and the use of environmentally-preferable materials and processes wherever practicable.

5.5.2 Ames Procedural Requirements 8500.1, Ames Environmental Procedural Requirements

APR 8500.1 sets forth general procedural requirements to ensure compliance with applicable federal, state, and local environmental laws; regulations and EOs; and NASA policies and procedures. Organizational directors, division chiefs, branch chiefs, section heads, supervisors, managers, and CORs are responsible for planning, designing, constructing, managing, operating, and maintaining facilities in conformance with applicable regulatory directives, and should obtain environmental review from the Environmental Management Division early in project planning consistent with NASA's NEPA implementing procedures (NPR 8580.1 and EO 12114), NASA policies and procedures for programs and projects (NPR 7120), and NASA regulations related to environmental quality (14 CFR 1216). Program and project managers should coordinate with the Environmental Management Division in a timely manner to ensure that any new or modified programs, projects, and activities comply with regulatory requirements.

5.5.3 Ames Environmental Work Instructions

Ames's EWIs, which replace the previous Ames Environmental Handbook (APR 8800.3), set forth requirements to ensure that programs, projects, and activities at ARC comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws; regulations and EOs; and NASA policies and



procedures. Each EWI lists relevant regulatory authorities and documents, assigns individual and organizational responsibilities within ARC, and identifies specific requirements applicable to the work being performed.

The following EWIs are relevant to operations and future development at ARC with the potential to impact recreational resources.

- EWI, 2-4 Wetlands and Flood Plains (Under review)
- EWI 12, Public Involvement
- EWI 14, NEPA and Environmental Justice
- EWI 18, Environmental Requirements for Construction Projects (Under review)

5.5.4 **NASA Ames Development Plan Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement**

Under Mitigated Alternative 5 in the NADP EIS, ARC has committed to the following design measures to ensure that implementation of the NADP does not adversely affect recreational resources.

- Approximately 6.4 hectares (15.7 acres) of new park space would be added to the NRP area, as well as approximately 4.6 hectares (11.4 acres) of new active recreational space in the Bay View area and approximately 3.2 hectares (7.8 acres) in the Ames Campus area for a total of 14.1 hectares (34.9 acres).
- Approximately 12 hectares (28 acres) of existing undeveloped land in the Bay View area would be developed, leaving a total of approximately 22.35 hectares (55.23 acres) of passive open space, which would function as wildlife habitat.
- No additional active parkland would be lost under this alternative.
- New residents and employees added under the NADP would generate a total demand for 10.2 hectares (25.3 acres) of new parkland.
- A total of 14.1 hectares (34.9 acres) of new parkland would be added to ARC for a surplus of 3.9 hectares (9.6 acres).

The NADP EIS concludes that there would be no negative effects on the quality of any existing or proposed parks or open spaces as a result of implementing Mitigated Alternative 5, except for temporary noise impacts due to construction. Moreover, the EIS has determined that Mitigated Alternative 5 would include a surplus of recreational lands, so it would not add to any cumulative impact that might occur, and could help mitigate these cumulative impacts as the parkland in NRP and Bay View would be open to the community. As such, no additional measures are needed to address recreational impacts from ongoing NADP development.